

1: Federal W-5 (no date) 1986
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
Georgia

DRUMS AND SHADOWS

262
777 had known of people who were "fuhbid tuh eat eel fish mong
udduh tings." ⁸⁵

115 Our visit was such a pleasant one that we stayed for a
while longer to talk. The household was an unusually con-
tented and peaceful one. The old couple were apparently
(737) satisfied with a simple scheme of existence although Alec did
venture the usual remark regarding his old-age pension.
"Sho would lak tuh hab it, missus. Mebbe yuh kin git dem
gubment folks tuh see dat I gits it."

581 When we were about ready to leave, a middle-aged daugh-
587 ter, who had been lingering at the gateway, came up and
joined the group. She confided that she had been married to
one man for thirty years, but that he had died and she had
recently remarried. This second marriage was evidently not
(593) so successful, for she said, "Dis huzbun ain lak duh fus one.
He's triflin an ain sech a good providuh. Wen I loss duh
fus huzbun, I sho loss ebryting."

593 At that time Rachel and Alec had been married for fifty-
115 seven years and during all this period there had been few
differences or unpleasant happenings. As Alec escorted us
to the car he told us of his high regard for his wife, assuring
us in conclusion, "I ain nebuh had no trouble wid uh. Ain
so much as tech uh wid a pocket hankuhchuh sence I done
bin had uh."

115 A little later we went to visit Susan Maxwell,* who was
sitting on the porch of her house when we drove up. She
was about ninety-two years old and, having been ill recently,
was snugly wrapped up in a variety of garments.

342 The house, she told us, was about one hundred years old.
A hall ran from the front to the back part, and from the back
porch a passage led to a lean-to kitchen. A barn near the
(343) house was about to collapse from age and lack of repair.
In the yard a black ox lay chained under a tree and a large

231 * Susan Maxwell, Possum Point.

Darien



361 THE NEGROES OF THE DARIEN SECTION, MANY OF
186 whom live in small scattered communities outside the town,
are proud of their Darien ancestry. When the younger people migrate to larger communities, it is a common thing to hear them say proudly, "My people come from Darien."

361 One of the most typical settlements is opposite the Todd
[368] Grant Negro School. A few houses are clustered about the knoll facing the school building, and more dilapidated board shacks are scattered over the little hill. At the top is Aunt Jane Lewis' cabin, surrounded by small sheds and fenced patches of ground where chickens and a goat are kept from wandering too far. At the north a few cypress trees straggle off to the wood. A sturdy bush provides the sunny drying ground for the gourds that later will be used as water dippers.

• [342]
[343]
[351]
[415]
[824] Aunt Jane * claims that she is one hundred and fifteen years old, and to see the small bent woman with the deeply lined black skin and filmy eyes is to believe her claim. Her voice is high pitched, with the thin timbre of extreme age, but she still moves with sudden agile gestures. During our conversation she hopped up from the steps and began to do the Buzzard Lope ¹⁷ to illustrate her story.

115 "I belong tuh Robert Toodle wut lib in Nawt Calina an
567 he sole me down yuh wen Ise twenty-one. I ain membuhs much bout Nawt Calina but uh membuhs plenty bout duh ole days yuh, cuz I bin yuh-neah bout a hunnud yeahs. I be-

* Jane Lewis, Darien.

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D A R I E N

361 trim lawns, and the thoroughfare was shaded by old moss-hung trees. After a distance the road narrowed; for a time there were no houses in sight; then we came to the Low Bluff community. Negro cabins dotted the landscape and the settlement terminated at a grassy bluff where stood the last small house.

115 We were looking for Priscilla McCullough* and the
342 obliging neighbors directed us to her house. It stood to the left of the roadway, a queer haphazard little dwelling place that looked like something out of a fairy tale. It was a tumble-down house, painted white, its roof patched with pieces of loose roofing which overlapped one another and hung down some distance in the front. An irregular fence made alternately of board and wire surrounded it. The tiny
(351) porch was crowded with old pieces of furniture and miscel-
(352) laneous items, including half of a tattered screen which hung at one side. Near the house a second building leaned at such
(343) a precarious angle that it could be expected to tumble over momentarily.

115 We made our way down the little dirt walk and into the house and there in the center of the room sat Priscilla. She was sewing on a mattress which almost filled the small space. Even the bizarre exterior had not prepared us for the appearance of the inside of the house. Here again there was
(353) so much crowded together that it took a while before separate articles could be clearly seen. Jumbled closely around Priscilla was a mass of furniture, each article of which was in turn almost hidden by a burden of clothing, dishes, bottles, pictures, and items too numerous to mention.

(416) Priscilla adjusted her eyeglasses which were tied on with a shoestring and told us something of her early life. She said she had been "bawn tree yeahs fo freedom in Sumtuh, Sout Calina." As quite a young woman she had moved to

* Priscilla McCullough, near Darien.

Structure and Content of Household Units

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342 The traditional family household is situated in a large gap. Three, five or more units may have been built in this gap. This would be the home of one family. These units may be either individual and/or units with multiple extensions. The general patterns of these units is circular to semi-circular. The units themselves are wood structures built in a block "A" fashion. This structure is pilloved off the ground some twenty-two inches. Those units built in the fifties to early sixties were but cinder block models of this basic structure. Out at an extreme point of the semi-circle sits a half blocked "A" structure, the "outhouse."

• [343]
[514] More, inside plumbing units are being added on to houses, but the outhouse is commonly seen. Inside these older units some families have both gas and stove cooking options.

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362 Exclusive use of the pot belly stove may be the dominant habits in some sectors. Only use of gas stoves would be the more probable behavior of James Island residents. This is likely because wood is not as available. On James Island there is less wooded acreage, but newer and more expensive units. The floor space in many of these older and more commonly seen dwellings is some nine feet wide by thirty odd feet long. This space tends to be divided into living room, kitchen and one or two bedrooms. These units contain the minimum of old furniture and a heater.

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